## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO** 



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Public Health is Return on Investment (ROI): Save Lives, Save Money

**San Bernardino.** Good health doesn't happen by chance. It's shaped and nurtured, and requires investment in environments in which we live, work, and play. It's tied to the resources in our communities; and is linked to a person's access to health care. These connections to good health are where you find Public Health.

This year, in recognition of National Public Health Week, the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health (DPH) will host a Public Health Exhibition at the County Government Center on Tuesday, April 9, 2013 from 8 am to 12 pm. The exhibition will promote this year's theme, "Public Health is ROI (Return on Investment): Save Lives, Save Money by displaying DPH's programs and services available to the community.

"In the business world, ROI refers to the amount of profit made in relation to the capital invested. In public health, ROI refers to avoided medical spending due to investments in prevention and early disease detection," said Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., County Health Officer. "ROI can also be measured in the number of diseases and injuries prevented, the number of lives saved and the amount of productivity gained."

By adequately supporting local public health investments, programs such as Clinic Operations have expanded health care services by integrating prevention and primary care services in the public health clinics. This has reduced unnecessary emergency room visits and saved medical costs. In 2012, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) provided food assistance to 17,500 infants each month reducing low birth-weight babies. The Coordinated Asthma Referral and Education (CARE) program conducted 400 home visits for children with asthma, reducing school absenteeism and improving academic achievements.

The Division of Environmental Health Services has inspected over 18,000 food facilities, reducing foodborne illness in the County and saving up to \$75,000 in lost business, lawsuits and medical costs. "Supporting public health approaches to better health does reap life-saving returns. Research shows there is a \$5.60 return for every \$1 invested in prevention," said Dr. Ohikhuare.

For more information about San Bernardino County National Public Health Week Celebration, please call 1-800-782-4264 or visit our website at <a href="https://www.sbcounty.gov/dph">www.sbcounty.gov/dph</a>.

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